



OPENING STATEMENT
for
THE TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR CATCH
DOCUMENTATION SCHEMES

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9:30, 18 April, 2016, Green Room

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to Rome and to FAO to participate in the Technical Consultation on the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS).

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains one of the greatest threats to aquatic ecosystems, undermining national, regional and international efforts to manage fisheries sustainably and conserve aquatic biodiversity. Trade-based measures is one of a number of tools for combating IUU fishing activities, and catch and trade documentation schemes represent one very important trade-based measure, initially developed by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). As these schemes continue to evolve, they are being supplemented by other instruments such as the European Union (EU) regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

The Sixty-Eighth Session of the UN General Assembly, in 2013, called upon States to urgently initiate work with FAO on the elaboration of guidelines with regard to trade and catch documentation schemes, including possible formats.

The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), in its Thirty-First session in Rome, in 2014, stipulated future work relating to the harmonization of catch documentation schemes. The Committee agreed that FAO undertakes the development of guidelines and other relevant criteria relating to catch documentation schemes, including possible formats, based on six principles.

An Expert Consultation on the Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes was organized successfully in July 2015, with generous support from Norway. Experts with support from knowledgeable resource persons developed the draft Guidelines, which were consequently reviewed by the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade at its Fifteenth Session in Agadir, Morocco, in February this year.

The Sub-Committee on Fish Trade reviewed both the Expert Consultation draft Guidelines and an alternative proposal prepared by a group of Members. The Sub-Committee supported the holding of this Technical Consultation, using the alternative proposal as a starting point and taking into

consideration the relevant elements of the expert proposal and others raised by the Sub-Committee in Agadir. This comprises therefore the basic conditions for this Technical Consultation, which is subsequently reflected in the working document provided.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to remind you that there is global consensus that CDS should not become an unnecessary trade barrier. The purpose of developing the Guidelines is to provide guidance to all stakeholders in developing, implementing, reviewing, and enhancing such schemes to make it an effective tool in combating IUU fishing. In this regard, international cooperation is critical to ensure their effective implementation.

Special consideration should also be paid to the demand from developing countries and small scale fisheries for technical assistance, including the development of electronic systems. FAO encourages governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and financial institutions to support capacity building. FAO is prepared to contribute joint efforts in providing technical assistance in this regard.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Norway for providing the funds necessary to hold this and previous Consultations. I wish you fruitful deliberations over the coming days and look forward with interest to the results of your work.

I wish you all a very enjoyable stay in Rome.

Thank you very much for your attention.